

**MONTANA BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS &
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS**

FINGERPRINTING & BACKGROUND CHECKS INSTRUCTIONS

Each professional counselor licensure applicant is required to undergo a fingerprint and background check. Included in this packet are instructions, an Authorization to Release Information, and a sample fingerprint card that includes the address to the Criminal Records Division of the Montana Department of Justice.

Prior to having your prints taken you will need:

- a check or money order for \$27.25 made payable to the Montana Department of Justice, Criminal Records Division,
- a 12x9 manila envelope addressed to the Montana Department of Justice, Criminal Records Division. Postage is required to mail the envelope *with its contents*. Please check with your local post office and add the accurate postage **PRIOR** to going to the law enforcement agency that is collecting your fingerprints and,
- a completed Authorization to Release Information form.

Take these instructions, sample fingerprint card, check or the money order, postage paid envelope, and release form with you to the law enforcement or other agency that provides fingerprint processing. If possible, have your prints taken at a facility that offers digital print services. The risk of unusable prints is reduced as a result of digital mastery.

A representative from the law enforcement agency of your choosing will take your fingerprints. Using a blank card from the agency, add your personal information AND add the **bolded** information **as it appears on the sample card**. This includes the **EMPLOYEE AND ADDRESS, REASON FINGERPRINTED AND THE ORI NUMBER**. It is very important for successful processing that the information is **accurately completed as it appears on the sample card**. Place the completed fingerprint card, the check or money order, and the Authorization to Release Information form in the pre-addressed, postage paid envelope. The envelope should be mailed directly from the law enforcement agency to the **Montana Department of Justice, Criminal Records Division. The address is 2225 11th Avenue, P.O. Box 201403, Helena, MT 59620-1403**. The address is also included at the bottom of the sample finger print card.

If your fingerprint card is rejected, as may occur, the Board office will contact you by mail with a letter and a copy of your rejection notice to facilitate taking a second set of fingerprints. You are not required to pay a second fee to the Montana Department of Justice, Criminal Records Division. Simply repeat the process above and include a copy of the letter from this office and the rejection notice with your new fingerprint card. We cannot guarantee the local law enforcement agency you request to obtain your fingerprints will not charge you a second fee. Any applicant is allowed a total of 3 rejections. In the event that this occurs, the Montana Department of Justice, Criminal

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Records Division will initiate a manual name based check. A manual check may take 2-4 weeks to complete.

The resulting Criminal History Record (aka "rap sheet" or "FBI identification record") will be sent directly to the Board of Social Work Examiners and Professional Counselors. In accordance with 28 CFR § 50.12, these records may be used solely for the purpose requested and cannot be disseminated outside the receiving departments, related agencies, or other authorized entities. The agency may not convey the actual criminal record to the individual to whom the criminal history record pertains. The agency may indicate to the individual that the individual has been convicted of or is under pending charges for a crime that bears upon his or her fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of consumers.

An application for licensure as a professional counselor or social worker will not be considered to be complete until the information the fingerprint and background information is received from the Montana Department of Justice, Criminal Records Division and processed by the Board Office. Results of the background check will be sent directly to the Board office by the State of Montana Department of Justice.

You will only be contacted by this office ***if*** a disqualifying event is identified on the report.

Please contact the board office at 406-841-2203 or 2235 **or by e-mail at dlibsdswpc@mt.gov** if you have any questions.